

stems from simple economics and the law of supply and demand. Our efforts should be focused on getting right to the heart of the matter by working to increase our Nation's energy supplies and reducing our demand. It is not enough to do one or just the other; we must do both. According to the International Energy Agency, global demand is 86 million barrels of oil per day and global supply is about 85.5 million barrels per day.

While Congress's record in increasing energy supplies has been scant as of late, we have made progress in recent years.

In 2006, I helped negotiate, with Senator NELSON, the opening of 8.3 million acres in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. This area is estimated to contain 5.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.25 billion barrels of oil, and it is currently open and available for exploration. This area was denied until 2006. It is now open and available for exploration.

The Gas Price Reduction Act honors the compromise that was reached in 2006, protecting Florida's gulf coast, while empowering other States to explore for oil and gas if it is supported by the Governors and State legislature.

I believe increasing our Nation's domestic energy supply is perhaps the most critical component to lowering gas prices, and to overlook it would be grossly unwise. In addition to increasing our Nation's domestic supplies, I also believe we should have access to affordable alternatives.

Currently, Americans are paying a premium on Brazilian ethanol because we have a 50-cent-a-gallon tariff on Brazilian ethanol. If we mean what we say about offering cleaner, renewable alternatives to gasoline, I propose we eliminate this tariff. I plan to introduce an amendment that does just that.

The amendment I am proposing would repeal the 54-cent-a-gallon tariff on foreign ethanol that was extended for 2 years—December 31, 2010—under the recently passed 2008 farm bill.

The 2008 farm bill also extended the blenders credit for ethanol producers for 45 cents a gallon, which creates a trade barrier of 9 cents per gallon. Ethanol producers can also receive a small blenders tax credit of 10 cents a gallon if they produce less than 60 million gallons of ethanol per year.

My amendment helps to stop these protectionist policies and offers alternatives to hard-working Americans who are paying too much for gas.

On the other side of the equation, more must be done to reduce demand and promote conservation.

This Congress took a significant step by mandating CAFE energy standards in the Energy bill we passed in 2007, which was the largest increase in fuel economy standards in nearly 30 years. According to the Department of Transportation, these new fuel standards will save over 55 billion gallons of fuel and save American motorists more than \$100 billion over time.

But that is not enough. These standards will go a long way in helping to increase fuel economy, but more must be done to foster the market for efficient energy alternatives and other breakthrough technologies.

One of the more promising technologies in this area is advanced batteries for plug-in hybrids. The Gas Price Reduction Act contains \$500 million in research and development for advancements in plug-in technology and \$250 million in direct loans for manufacturers who retool factories to produce plug-in batteries. It will help to make batteries in many of the current hybrids more affordable and longer lasting.

In the long term, I envision a market where renewable fuels are viable and available and drivers will have affordable alternatives to fossil fuels such as gasoline. My State of Florida has been a leader in helping to make this vision a reality. The State recently created the Florida Energy Systems Consortium, which brings together researchers and resources from State universities to develop renewable energies.

The University of Central Florida—a member of the consortium—recently announced it is receiving \$8.75 million in grants to focus on how technology can make new and existing construction projects more energy efficient. In addition, with the help of \$20 million from the State of Florida, the University of Florida is currently building the State's first biorefinery, which could produce clean cellulosic ethanol to power our cars.

As we continue to discuss the ongoing energy crisis, I urge my colleagues to consider the consequences of failing to offer viable solutions to the American people as they grow increasingly worried over dwindling energy supplies in America. Now is not the time for the politics of energy. It is not the time for us to look for one-upsmanship in the political game. It is time for us to act on a problem that is hurting American families throughout the State of Florida and throughout the United States.

We need to address this problem. We need to put us on a track of finding more and using less—a track that, where possible, is environmentally safe, where we can produce more domestic energy, while at the same time turning loose the energies of this Nation, the technology, to look for future opportunities for different blends of fuels, different types of automobiles, and other ways we can improve the efficiency of our fleet so that we can increase the opportunity for the American people to live in a world that is cleaner and in which they can afford to drive their kids to school and go to work. When we have alternative fuels available, they may not have to be totally dependent upon fossil fuels or imported oil.

I believe this is imperative, and it is an issue of national security proportions. We cannot continue to transfer our wealth overseas. We are transfer-

ring, year after year, \$750 billion to countries that are not particularly our friends. Some of them, in fact, would be considered hostile to us. Nonetheless, we purchase oil from them because of our necessity; our need is too great.

The fact is, we know there is plenty of political opportunity on both sides of the aisle on this issue. The American people are focused on this, and the American people are saying: Please do something about this. Hear our cry for help.

I say that this is the time for bipartisan cooperation, for us to come together, Republicans and Democrats, put partisan interests aside, put American interests first, and look for ways to cooperate, work together, and do what is doable, do what can be done.

On five occasions, I have voted to open ANWR to oil exploration. Whether that is acceptable or not, let's come together and decide. I would be prepared to support that once again. If that is a deal-breaker, let's not go there. Let's look for those common-ground areas where we can agree and move forward with a comprehensive energy plan.

Let's not say we have done our job by simply looking at speculation as a scapegoat. We can deal with that and add transparency to it, but that is not an answer in and of itself.

We have to have a comprehensive approach that tackles the issue of supply, that tackles the issue of demand, where we have more oil available, where the supply is increased from domestic production, American production on America's lands and shores, and where we can also reduce our consumption, utilize less. That will make America a safer place. Then we can go home for this August break and face our citizens and let them know we did a job they sent us here to do; not to play politics but to get the job done for the American people.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I was in the House of Representatives for 14 years and have been in the Senate for a year and a half, as has the Presiding Officer. During that time, all of us have noticed when there is a spike in oil prices, as there has been obviously intermittently for decades in this country, we can always ascribe a spike in oil prices to one of several factors: either a major fire in a refinery or there might have been an outage on a pipeline somewhere in our country. It might have come from something such as Hurricane Katrina, some major natural disaster in our country that